

**CONCURRING STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Implementation of Section 304 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Commercial Availability of Navigation Devices, CS Docket No. 97-80

Starting from the premise that consumers are better served by having more choices and options, I am concerned about any extension that delays the commercial availability of set-top boxes. Nevertheless, I concur in the decision to extend the January 1, 2005 deadline for MVPDs to stop deploying integrated set-top boxes, rather than to eliminate the requirement altogether. Given recent and ongoing industry developments, not extending the deadline at this time would have forced consumers in the short-term to lease costlier devices or purchase technology that will likely become obsolete once the industry works out the remaining details on bi-directional cable compatibility.

I would have preferred a shorter extension period that would have kept more pressure on the Commission and the industry to ensure that competitive navigational devices are made commercially available as soon as possible, as the statute requires. The Commission must continue to do all it can to keep the DTV transition moving forward expeditiously.

It is important to note that the Commission will revisit this issue again in 18 months. While I would have liked to do so before then, I do believe the Commission, as well as the Congress, will be expecting great further progress on the road toward the exciting new world of digital television for which we have been waiting too long.